



FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL®
UNITED STATES

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Frequently Asked Questions about FSC Membership

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WHAT IS FSC?

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, member-led, non-profit organization that assures environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically prosperous forest management through independent third-party certification and labeling of wood, paper and other forest products.

Based in Bonn, Germany, FSC was founded in 1993 in response to public concern about deforestation and demand for a credible wood-labeling system. FSC sets rigorous forest management and chain of custody standards, which are then used by third-party auditors to ensure that those standards are being met in the management of forests and the production of forest products. FSC's on-product labeling allows businesses and consumers to choose products from well-managed forests—those that are managed to meet the social, economic and ecological needs of present and future generations. FSC is also the only forest certification organization endorsed by such major environmental organizations as the World Wildlife Fund, National Wildlife Federation and Greenpeace.

FSC US is the national initiative of FSC and is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

WHAT IS MEMBERSHIP?

FSC is a membership association and is governed by its members.

Members represent their interests based on their professional activities, regardless of the type of membership (individual or organizational). The diversity of interests is reflected in the three-chamber structure that forms FSC membership: economic, environmental and social.

When applying for membership, stakeholders select the following:

- **Type:** Individual or Organizational



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- **Chamber:** Environmental, Social or Economic
- **Sub-chamber:** North or South, based on whether you are legally registered in a high-income country (North) or non high-income country (South), according to the World Bank definition. The United States is in the Northern sub-chamber.

FSC members have the right to vote on a variety of policy and governance related topics, including the election of FSC board members (FSC International Board of Directors and FSC US Board of Directors). All FSC members in good standing¹ may vote in the board elections. Most FSC members based in the United States may also run for the FSC International Board and the FSC US Board.²

FSC members are encouraged to attend the FSC General Assembly, the triennial forum at which motions are presented and voted upon by members. The votes of all individual members in each sub chamber represent only 10% of the total vote of the sub chamber, while the votes of all member organizations make up the other 90%.

FSC members pay annual membership dues according to their type of membership.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING AN FSC CERTIFICATE HOLDER AND AN FSC MEMBER?

Being an FSC member and FSC certificate holder are often confused. Both are ways to support the work of FSC.

When you become an FSC member, you show you support the principles of the FSC and the improvement of forest management around the world. FSC members in good standing have the right to vote on policy, standards and governance, including the election of FSC board members.

Being an FSC certificate holder means that your business has been certified by a third-party accredited FSC certification body and that your business complies with FSC standards and policies. Certificate holders are encouraged to become members – because only membership conveys voting rights on a variety of policy and governance related topics and signals your commitment to a robust FSC system.

If you are interested in learning more about how to become FSC certified please go to www.fsc.org.

¹ Voting rights of a member are automatically suspended when dues are five months in arrears.

² Certification bodies, government owned or controlled entities and industry associations may not be represented on the Board of Directors.



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WHY IS FSC MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURED TO ENSURE CHAMBER BALANCE?

In order to balance the interests of different stakeholders, FSC is governed by three chambers that make decisions cooperatively. The three chambers represent environmental, economic and social interests. Each chamber in turn is divided into two sub-chambers, Global North and Global South, to guarantee equal weight of vote and influence among the various countries and economic powers represented. Members based in the United States are in the Global North sub-chamber.

HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER?

The FSC US Membership Overview and Application PDFs (available for download on the Membership webpage: <https://us.fsc.org/en-us/who-we-are/membership>) include detailed information on the application process and checklist of required materials to submit a membership application.

The basic steps include:

1. Filling out the application form in the Membership Packet
2. Providing two letters of support from current FSC members
3. Providing all publicly available supporting information as identified in the checklist
4. Signing the FSC Policy for Association
5. Submitting the application and materials to FSC-US at info@us.fsc.org.
6. Waiting for review and approval by the FSC International Membership Committee

WHY SHOULD I BECOME AN FSC MEMBER?

FSC is a participatory association. The membership is the highest authority of FSC and the ultimate decision-maker. FSC relies on the diversity of our members to give us voice, balance and integrity. But not all FSC certificate holders and environmental and social stakeholders are members. Many simply do not realize that membership is an option – nor how important it is for FSC's success.

FSC needs your participation as a member. With each new member, FSC becomes stronger and more grounded in true democracy. Please join us in our mission to see that more of the world's forests are managed to FSC's high environmental and social standards.

WHAT DOES IT COST TO BE A MEMBER?

The membership dues in the chart below apply to FSC members in the Northern sub-chamber, of which the United States is a part. The fee structure for organizational



members is based on either the number of employees the organization has or its turnover (revenues / expenses for non-profit organizations) depending on what is easier for you to measure. FSC membership renews automatically at the beginning of each year.

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Individual Membership | \$100 Annual Fee |
|------------------------------|------------------|

| Non-profit Organizations | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Subcategory | Size of Organization | | Annual Fee |
| | Based on # of employees | Based on Turnover | |
| Small | 1-100 | < \$15 Million | \$150 |
| Medium | 101-200 | \$15 - 30 Million | \$1,000 |
| Large | 201-1000 | \$30 – 150 Million | \$2,000 |
| Very Large | > 1000 | > \$150 Million | \$5,000 |

| For-profit Organizations | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Subcategory | Size of Organization | | Annual Fee |
| | Based on # of employees | Based on Turnover | |
| Very Small | 1-100 | < \$20 Million | \$200 |
| Small | 101-200 | \$20 - 40 Million | \$1,500 |
| Medium | 201-1000 | \$40 – 200 Million | \$3,000 |
| Large | 1001-10,000 | \$200 M – 2 Billion | \$6,000 |
| Very Large | > 10,000 | > \$2 Billion | \$10,000 |



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WHO CAN BECOME AN FSC MEMBER?

Individuals and organizations (both businesses and non-profit) who support the idea of improved forest management around the world can become an FSC member. All members should demonstrate an active commitment to FSC and its Principles and Criteria.

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF FSC?

The most up to date record of current members of FSC can be found at the following link.

All International FSC Members – <http://info.fsc.org/publicmembersearch>

All FSC US Members – available for download at the FSC US Membership website: <https://us.fsc.org/en-us/who-we-are/membership>

WILL I RECEIVE REGULAR INFORMATION FROM FSC?

FSC maintains a special email and intranet to keep members updated on upcoming Accreditation Services International (ASI) audits, drafts of standards, newly accredited FSC working groups, Board of Director nominations and elections, and other information. Members also receive e-newsletters from FSC International Center and FSC US.